The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

In this column a month ago we expressed regret that so far the Churches had done little to achieve that Christian unity about which so much was said and written during the war. Consequently, we have read with the deepest sympathy a letter which Dr. Gore wrote to "The Inquirer" of the 24th of January. It is so much to the point, and expresses so clearly the urgent need of Christian co-operation in social matters, that we would like to reproduce Dr. Gore's letter as it appeared in "The Inquirer" a week ago :—

"Sir,—It is commonly agreed that at least in matters concerned with the promotion of social reorganisation and moral witness, all Christians had better behave as if they were one body and co-operate at once. By this means we get to know one another and work together, and as no question of religious doctrine is involved there need be no delay and no fear. It is also a great advantage that the Roman Catholics can and do co-operate cordially on this basis. The Christian Social Crusade has accordingly been formed. Its object is—

1. To promote Interdenominational Social Service Unions in every town so as to make the Christian voice effective on Social and Moral Questions.

2. To affiliate all such Councils or Unions so that they may be kept in touch with one another, and that the experience of each may be made available for all.

This is a distinct piece of work, and the Crusade is keeping carefully in touch with other organisations so as to avoid overlapping. We have received a good deal of encouragement.

I am writing now to ask all persons who may read this letter, and are interested in promoting the cause of Interdenominational action for public moral witness and social betterment in a vigorous and effective form, to write to one of our Secretaries, Miss Lucy Gardner, or Mr. St. John Reade, at the office, 92, St. George's Square, S.W.1.—Yours, etc.,

CHARLES GORE (Bishop),
Chairman."

* * *

Not less pertinent than the above letter is the sympathetic comment made by the editor of "The Inquirer" on its contents and the summary of its practical aims. These he emphasises as follow :—(1) "The drawing together of the professed followers of Christ; (2) the influencing of municipalities in their enlarging work; and (3) the humanising and spiritualising of politics, those of labour in particular." If both

Dr. Gore and the editor are thinking chiefly of English conditions, there is just as great an opportunity for Christian co-operation in this country. We have made a beginning in respect to the movement with which Dr. Gore is identified, but there is certainly need of more enthusiastic support to make it strong here. We would again most heartily commend this Christian Social Crusade to our readers.

WHY GO TO CHURCH?

SERMON PREACHED AT HOLYWOOD BY REV. G. LEONARD PHELPS.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is."—HEBREWS x. 25.

As I am speaking to Church members, it is not necessary that I should set forth the grounds of our belief in God and the reality of the spiritual life. You are not atheists or materialists, and would feel insulted if either of these names were given you. Life has been speeded up, business is more exacting and tiring than ever before, and the need for rest and recreation is consequently greater. This is true, but not all the truth. For most people there has been a reduction of the number of working hours of late years, and rightly so. It is not good to spend so much time earning a living as to leave no time in which to live. But it is not only physical rest and recreation that we need. In the strain and stress of work our hopes and ideals, God and the spiritual life, are apt to be forgotten. We have need of spiritual refreshing, we have need of being reminded of the deeper meaning and the loftier purposes of life. It is good to call to mind the cloud of witnesses with which we are compassed about and the splendid aspirations which we should share with the best of our kind. By assembling ourselves together, by holding communion with each other and with God, by devoting a part of our day of rest to satisfying our souls' hunger and thirst, we best fit ourselves for the more complicated and exacting life of our times. Emerson was right when he said: "'Tis certain that worship stands in some commanding relation to the health of man, and to his highest powers, so as to be, in some manner, the source of intellect. All the great ages have been ages of belief. I mean, when great national movements began, when arts appeared, when poems were made, the human soul was in earnest, and had its thoughts on spiritual verities, with as strict a grasp as that of the hands on the sword, or the pencil or the trowel." Unless we are content to live as though God were not and as though all our purest thoughts and highest hopes were of little consequence, we must cultivate communion with God and must nourish our spiritual natures. But, as I have said, the pulpit is not now the only teacher in these matters. Let us be honest with ourselves. How many people who stay away from Church spend their time in reading or thinking of these things? You certainly can find in literature a great deal to help the spiritual life, but Public Worship provides what literature cannot in anything like the same degree, the sense of togetherness. We are not lonely searchers after truth, but sharers in a common aspiration. Those who take delight in reading elevating and inspiring literature, and I wish they were far more numerous than they are, would find that their reading is immensely helped by joining with others in Public Worship and cultivating the habit of devotion.

Then there are those who say that they can worship as well in the fields and woods as in a Church. True "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands," but again let us be honest. How many of those who take a walk instead of going to Church give a thought to worship? God is present everywhere, but we only find Him in fields and woods if we have found Him first of all in our own hearts, and we best find Him in our own hearts when we do not neglect the opportunity afforded by public worship to satisfy the yearnings of the spirit. As George Eliot said in one of her letters: "One

wants a temple beside the out-door temple—a place where human beings do not ramble apart, but meet with a common impulse." To unite in hymn and prayer, to read together some of the most noble utterances of the world's greatest prophets and teachers, and to turn our thoughts to the things that are unseen and eternal, is to open our eyes to the presence of God everywhere. True, it is the life and character that count, not the mere outward act of worship, but life and character require training and require the right spirit within. How is character formed? Ultimately it depends on the standard of values we accept. On what things do we set the highest value, the things of the spirit—righteousness, truth, justice, mercy, honour, love—or the things of the world—food, clothing, wealth, fame? It is not just a matter of choice, accepting the one and rejecting the other; it is rather giving to each its proper place. In theory, at least, every Church member sets the highest value on the things of the spirit and aims at making them the first consideration. In practice, the things of the world have a way of forcing themselves upon our attention, we have to get a living in order that we may live, but we do not want to spend all our time and lay waste our powers in getting and spending. It requires some deliberate effort to retain our ideals and to resist the tendency to live for the things of the world only. As loyalty to our King and country is strengthened by the cultivation of the sentiment of patriotism, so loyalty to our God and His kingdom of righteousness, truth and love is strengthened by the cultivation of the spirit of worship.

Apart from the desire which we should all feel to rescue our lives from the sodidness of being entirely occupied with getting and spending, there come to all of us times when we have need of the consolation and strength of religion. The reason why so many people find that religion fails them in hours of sad bereavement or sore temptation is that they have taken it too much for granted and have neglected to give it the necessary nourishment. The Psalmist who could say: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me," possessed that faith because he had been conscious of the Divine presence in green pastures and beside still waters. It is only those who keep their religion in constant use that can rely upon its being of service in times of crisis.

These are some of the reasons why we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. For our own sakes, in order that we may keep in touch with the eternal verities, that we may be reminded of great ideals and the highest duties, that we may not forget that we are children of God with some better purpose in life than just grabbing whatever we can get. We do not come to Church to appease God, but to draw near to Him. We do not come to save ourselves from punishment after death, but to learn the way of life.

The age in which we live is seething with discontent and unrest. After the gigantic upheaval of the war there has come a moral and spiritual reaction. Many of the old landmarks have been removed, and there are signs of widespread degeneracy. Ruthless profiteers and ruthless strikers are between them driving us towards a class warfare which will be as bitter and disastrous as the war between nations. We are face to face with moral bankruptcy. Never was there a time when there was greater need for a real religious enthusiasm and a strong affirmation of the spiritual ends of human life. And we who profess and call ourselves Christians sometimes wonder why Christianity was powerless to stop the war, and is likely to be equally powerless to stop the class war when we are ourselves so lukewarm that the flimsiest excuse is sufficient for neglecting the simplest duty. It is not Christianity that is at fault, but Christians. The world takes our religion at our own valuation, and as we do not appear to think that it matters much we cannot be surprised that the world considers it of no consequence. If we showed that we really valued it, and were at

least as keen about it as we are about our business or our amusements, the world would think there must be something in it, and would no longer be indifferent. Surely we must see that the way of life for individuals, for classes, and for nations is along the path of religion. Atheism and materialism have failed, they have landed the world into the war and the present discontent and unrest. By atheism and materialism I do not mean the profession of these things, but practical atheism and materialism, living as though there were no God and as though only material things mattered, and this, alas! is often accompanied by a profession of religion. The only way of salvation is a loftier idealism, a deeper faith, and a more genuine goodwill—in other words, the way of Christ. If we want the world to take that way we must remember that we are ourselves part of the world, and can begin by taking that way ourselves. Let us make a more determined effort to be what we profess to be, and let us help each other in that determination by not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.

The members of our Household of Faith are perhaps sinners above the rest in this matter. One of the reasons is that we suffer from the defects of our qualities. We do not set a supreme value upon creeds, confessions, and ceremonials, the outward forms of religion. People may accept the true creed and be very regular in their attendance at worship, yet live un-Christian lives. But this is really no justification of carelessness. People may shake hands when they meet though they have no friendly feelings; but if there are friendly feelings the hand-shake is not a mere formality. If we neglect the little formalities we are apt to grow careless of the realities they symbolise. This is true of religion, as well as of manners. Further, I would have you remember what our Church stands for. It stands for liberty of conscience, for a rational religion, and for a practical faith. To our forefathers in the faith the liberty which we now enjoy would have seemed an impossible dream: they had to make great sacrifices, they were debarred from civil rights, they were persecuted and penalised, but they endured as seeing Him who is invisible. They suffered losses financially, politically and socially in order that those who came after them might be free. We have every right to be proud of our forefathers in the faith, for these splendid men and women who endured so much for their religion, always and everywhere showed also a fine integrity in business, lived by a high standard in their private lives, and were generous and public-spirited in everything that pertained to the common good. It is something to have such ancestors and to be proud of them, but in our gratitude and our pride we should sometimes ask ourselves whether they would be proud of us. Do we value sufficiently that for which they paid so high a price? Milton once said that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Eternal vigilance is certainly the price of a rational religion and a practical faith as well. In vain did our forefathers sacrifice and suffer unless we prize and use that which they handed on to us. If we prize it and use it it shall make of us what it made of them.

We are passing through a period of unrest and reconstruction. Many are finding that the ancient creeds do not satisfy their needs; in most Churches there is a movement of thought in our direction. We believe that we have just the message which the age requires. But we must show that we appreciate it ourselves if we are to expect others to be drawn to it. Sometimes visitors from other Churches, or from no Church, attend our Services, but when they see how poorly our own members attend they are not likely to be impressed very favourably.

By more regular attendance at our services you not only help to render those services more hearty and effective, you minister to your own needs, you form habits for yourselves and for your children which will keep the life of the spirit from stagnation and decay, you repay something of the debt you

owe to those whose descendants you are proud to be, and you follow in the footsteps of the Master Himself who "went into the synagogue, as His custom was, on the Sabbath Day."

A LEAGUE OF RELIGIONS.

Recently, in the "Christian Life,' there appeared an account of a meeting held at the Caxton Hall, London, to form a League of Religions, to act as a support of the League of Nations. The Bishop of Kensington presided. Among the speakers were the Rev. Morris Joseph (Liberal Jew), Canon Horsley, Miss Maude Royden, Rev. Scott Lidgett, Dr. Walsh, the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Carpenter, Mr. Apparas (Hindu), Inayat Khan (Sufi), Mr. de Silva (Buddhist). The greatest cordiality and goodwill prevailed, and the new Society was launched upon its voyage with much *eclat*.

As a preliminary to this inauguration, a book appeared by the Rev. J. Tyssul Davis, B.A., the present minister of the Theistic Church, and who is well-known among English Unitarians, the title of which is "A League of Religions."

Mr. Davis has travelled in the East, and was Principal of a native college in Ceylon for a few years, where he did exceedingly good work under difficult circumstances. This book is written in a popular style, and in concentrated form gives the gist of each religion in a living and sympathetic style, supplying many fresh items of interest concerning it. The religions he deals with are :—

Zoroastrianism—The Religion of Purity
Brahmanism—The Religion of Justice.
Buddhism—The Religion of Compassion.
Confucianism—The Religion of the Golden Rule.
Mohammadanism—The Religion of Submission.
Christianity—The Religion of Service.

And he brings the whole study to a point in a Religion of the League of Nations.

Dr. Carpenter has shown how very ancient is the figure of a balance and scale of justice; it is portrayed on an Egyptian papyrus before the time of Moses, it is carved in the French cathedrals. The fundamental conception of **judgment** is the same. A savage, in answer to a missionary's scorn of his idol, retorted, "This is not the spirit that steals through the trees; this is only the sign that he will always come when I want him." "Andrew Lang concluded that belief in a Supreme Being came first in the order of evolution, but was afterwards thrust into the background by lesser divinities."

At the head of the chapters, each one of which deals with a separate religion, the author gives selections from the Scriptures of that religion, and their names. Concerning Christianity, the author quotes Charles Wesley as saying that "Christianity consists in doing all the good you can, to all the people you can, in all the places you can, and at all the times you can."

In his final appeal, Mr. Davis recalls incidents, heard of during the war—a Jewish Rabbi ministering to a dying soldier who was a Roman Catholic, fetching a crucifix and holding it before the soldier's closing eyes. A Presbyterian minister whispering into the ear of a prostrate Moroccan cavalryman, "Allah! Allah!" A padre consoling a dying Indian, with the one word of peace he knew in his tongue, "Aum, Aum."

The little book closes with these words—"May their united wisdom enthral, and their holiness awe, and their love subdue the minds and hearts of men, until with a common passion and a common steadfastness they join hands to lift the burden of poverty and sorrow and sin, and hasten the dawning of the day, when liberated man,

"All difference with his fellow-mortal closed,
Shall be left standing face to face with God."

ULLIN.

BIRTH.

January 23rd, 1920, at Greenoge, Molesworth Road, Cookstown, to Mr. and Mrs. T. S. M'Kinstry—a son.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

The great increase in the cost of printing, chiefly due to higher rates of wages, has made the production of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian an anxious task. It is desirable that all Members of the Church should know exactly the position in which the Magazine stands, in order that those who are willing to do so, may have an opportunity of assisting in maintaining it by contributions towards its cost. The following statement for the past year (1919) is reproduced so that it may be contrasted with the estimated cost for the present year,

Dr.	£	s.	d.
January			
17 To Ulster Unit. Chris. Assoc. for advertising ..	3	0	0
22 ,, Donation from Dr. J. Campbell	20	0	0
February			
21 ,, Donation form Miss Irvine, Warrenpoint ..	1	0	0
May			
17 ,, Brit. & Foreign Unit. Assoc. for advertising ..	2	0	0
22 ,, T. & J. M'Ervel, for advertising ..	1	10	0
June			
3 ,, Donation from Larne Congregation ..	2	0	0
July			
2 ,, Donation from Dr. J. Campbell ..	7	0	0
January to December			
,, Receipts for Magazine ..	67	15	2½
	£104	5	2½
,, Amount required to balance	3	12	7
	£107	17	9½

Cr.	£	s.	d.
July			
31 By John Adams' printing Account to June, 1919	50	0	0
December			
30 ,, John Adams' balance of printing account to June, 1919 ..	4	0	0
January to December			
,, Postages, parcels etc. ..	0	13	9½
July to December			
,, Balance still due to John Adams for printing	53	4	0
	£107	17	9½

From this it will be seen that the expenses amounted to £107 17s. 9½d. and that the income from sales of the Magazine and advertisements amounted to £74 5s. 2½d., leaving a deficit of £33 12s. 7d. To meet this deficit, we had to rely upon donations from Miss Irvine, the Larne Congregation, and Dr. Campbell, amounting to £30. The Magazine has thus in the past required substantial help from donors. In the future it will need a great deal more help. For 1920, the printer will require £11 3s. 3d. a month, or a total of £133 9s 0d. for the year, and 13s. 9½d for postage. If the income from sales and advertisements keeps up to last year's level of £74 5s. 2½d. there will be a deficit of £59 17s. 7d. to be met by voluntary donations. We place this plain statement before our readers, in the hope that they will generously come to the rescue, and enable us to continue to publish the Magazine. Promises of help will be gladly received by Rev. A. Turner, Templepatrick.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY REV. G. V. CROOK AT THE ORDINATION OF REV. F. WOOLLEY TO YORK STREET CONGREGATION, JANUARY 22ND, 1920.

Presbyterian Government is vested n the hands of Church Committees, Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synod. Nearly all our Irish Congregations were Presbyterian in their origin, and all of them to-day profess to be. Our Irish Ecclesiastical organization does not fix our Christian interpretation of theology for us, but it does mould the character of our denominational and church life. For instance, the

Presbyterian form of government gives the minister a life interest in his pulpit and manse, it also gives every congregation freedom to choose the most suitable available man, but once their choice is made, they must abide by it. It is, in that sense, a marriage, and neither party to that marriage is afterwards free to sever the connection. The Presbytery to which that congregation belongs must give its consent to that marriage, and afterwards annul it if either party wishes a divorce. It is for this reason that a statement of Presbyterian ordination and a public profession of adherence to that relationship between minister and congregation has to be made by both parties.

Presbyterianism was primarily concerned with an intense desire for the real devotion of its people, and constructed its system of government so that neither party—neither minister nor congregation—by themselves could rule, but following the Master, both learn how to serve. Under that system a minister is not the minister of one particular congregation only, but a minister of the denomination as a unit. Our congregations need to realise more than they do at present that they are all parts of one denomination, and that through the Presbytery and the higher Church Court they are, or ought to be, united as one.

A Presbyterian Ordination, like the present one, being a democratic marriage, two parties are united together with duties, responsibilities and promises to each other and to the Presbytery, which are ratified and sealed by that higher court, which union may last "Till death do us part." Hence arises the care and wisdom necessary in the selection.

In the bygone days of our denomination in Ireland, when fully trained Presbyterian ministers filled all our pulpits and our congregations were managed through the ethical discipline of Elders, Sessions, and Visitations, we were a power in Ireland, even though our numbers were few; but to-day, when our pulpits are largely filled by those trained in a Congregational system of government, if a system it can be called at all, it is merely a rope of sand. Our churches across the water are under that weakest of all attempted forms of church organization, and that rope of sand has more or less permeated our Irish Churches without either minister or congregation fully realizing that such a position is quite dishonest for us in Ireland.

Rev. John Abernethy, the true father of our denomination in Ireland, gave us our only terms of Christian and ministerial communion in his famous letter on the defence of Presbyterianism. Presbyterianism necessarily requires that the Pastoral Relation be entered into, or dissolved, with the consent and by the interposition of an Ecclesiastical Assembly, Presbytery, or Synod. If any minister shall take the charge of a flock and they subject themselves to his ministry, or if a minister quit his charge or the people reject him without such consent and interposition, or if either party decline to obey the ruling of the higher court, those proceedings are directly contrary to the Presbyterian model. The rules and duties for both the minister and congregation are wisely and carefully arranged, so planned that if both parties carry out in detail there will be little likelihood of either party wishing for a divorce. Take, for instance, one of the duties on each side as an example. It is the duty of the minister to announce on two consecutive Sundays preceding any summoned Congregational or Presbytery Meeting, or if he does not any member can stop that meeting's proceedings. Trouble beyond words to describe has arisen in the past through the neglect of this duty on the part of the minister. It is the duty of the congregation through its treasurer to see that the minister is paid promptly and correctly. How much of the peace and joy of many of the ministerial settlements has been marred by the neglect of this duty on the part of the congregation. Let us remember that neglect of such duties is quite as dishonest as professing or signing a creed that we do not believe. As Presbyterians, we ought to remember the truth that he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much,

but he that is unfaithful in that which is least is unfaithful also in much."

The qualifying term "non-sub-scribing" leaves both minister and congregation free to think and utter their own thoughts on Christian theology; the minister being the steward of God, as well as the servant of the people, must refuse to be bound by any human creed, or interpretation of Christ's teaching as authoritative, always conscious that

> "God has yet more light and truth
> To break forth from That Word."

The Congregational ideal is simply allowing each comgregation to be a law unto itself; its effect is denominational anarchy. The Episcopalian ideal is obedience of the many to one clerical head; its effect is denominational tyranny.

The Presbyterian ideal is, both parties having rights, everything ought to be laid before an equal number of ministers and laymen, the voice of the majority ought to rule; its effect, Christian equality or the brotherhoodof humanity. Few will deny that John Abernethy had deep insight into the position that he stood for, a Presbyterian Church, unfettered in Christian thought. The Episcopalian John Wesley founded his Evangelical church, not on Episcopalianism, but on Presbyterianism, and he was probably the greatest church organizer in recent history. In adopting a modified Presbyterianism, he strengthened one of its weakest points. Presbyterianism recognises no difference of status in its ministry, yet one minister receives say £500 and another £100. Wesley saw at once the injustice of this in Presbyterianism and arranged almost an equal salary for all ministers. This largely accounts for the fact that the Wesleyan ministry is one of the finest brotherhoods in any denomination. Does not the temptation often arise to seek a larger stipend even in Presbyterianism, which is a temptation few of us ministers can withstand. We are very glad to notice that Presbyterianism is following Wesley in that, and has largely overcome that injustice; we still are far behind. Again, James Martineau, the Unitarian theologian, who was ordained in our Irish Presbyterianism, but whose ministerial career was largely spent in the Congregational system of our English churches, always held that the Presbyterian form of church government was far and away the most satisfactory, and did his utmost to bring all our congregations across the water to adopt it.

If we had John Wesley, the Episcopalian, James Martineau, the Unitarian, along with John Abernethy, here with us to-night we have no hesitation in saying that with one voice they would unite in holding that the most suitable and satisfactory church organization is the one on which our church in Ireland has been constructed, and why, because even from an intel lectual view point, a theological basis, be it Calvinistic, Armenian, or Unitarian, necessarily draws a circle excluding the others, the wisdom of John Abernethy lay in drawing a larger circle including them all.

Our church. like that of the early Christians, offers no lure to human ambition, no ladder of earthly dignities, presenting in the various portions of its ascent, temptations to pride and avarice, to jealous rivalries, to tampering with conscience, and to that abandonment of principle which the love and fear of the world so frequently produce. We aim at nothing but the primitive purity of the Apostolical constitutions, the naked simplicity of Evangelical truth, combined with that liberty of conscience wherewith the Son of God hath made us free. We employ no usurped authority in spiritual things, we adopt no creeds of human contrivance as improvements or supplements to the all-sufficient rule presented in the Scriptures. Though we dissent in many things from other churches, we are not dissenters from the church of Christ; for rejecting all others, we take Christ alone as our Supreme Guide. We believe that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and we receive, without question, whatever He has commun-

icated in respect to the nature of God and the purposes of the Divine Will.

"We shall never see together
Till we learn that the Truth is wide,
And that they who journey thither
Need not enter by one side—
Till we learn that each gate of vision
Is part of a mighty whole,
And that faith only finds fruition
When I see with my brother's soul."

G. V. C.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1920, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

1st February. Unreasonable Anger. Matthew v. 21-30. Key text, Eph. iv. 26. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

The passage for to-day is admirably expounded in Mr. Fox's "Practical Teaching." Note especially his explanations of "raca," "thou fool," and "hell fire."

Recall last Sunday's lesson. Jesus does not destroy the commandments, but fulfils them. The Rabbis before Jesus distinguished between the letter and the spirit. Montefiore in "The Synoptic Gospels," quotes the following:—"Some labourers broke the wine-barrels belonging to Rabba bar Chanan, and he took away their clothes. They came to Rab and told him what had happened. He said to Rabba, 'Give them back their clothes.' Rabba said to him, 'Is this the Law?' Rab said, 'Yes, it is, for we read in Proverbs, That thou mayest walk in the way of good men.' Rabba then gave them back their clothes. But they said to him: 'We are poor, and have toiled all day; we are hungry, and have nothing.' Then Rab said to Rabba, 'Go and give them their wages.' Rabba said to Rab, 'But is this the Law?' Rab said to him; 'Yes, it is, for it says in Proverbs, And keep the paths of the righteous.'" Jesus, however, goes even deeper than the difference between letter and spirit. The anger, which arises from bitter hatred and produces the scornful word, is the same in kind as that which leads to murder. He judges not our acts, bur our motives.

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work" must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me.
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

This applies to evil thoughts and feelings as well as to good. Jesus himself was sometimes angry, but never because of resentment of personal wrong. He was angry with the Pharisees, not because they did him harm, but because they were hypocrites and hindered good in others. His anger did not cause him to sin.

Some people say, "We don't pretend to be religious, we are not hypocrites, we don't go to church or profess to be Christians." Jesus does not say, "Don't bring your gift to the altar, but asks us to be reconciled first. Don't nurse your anger and then make it an excuse for not doing good, but control it so that it may no longer stand in the way of what is right."

8th February. Plain Speaking. Matthew v. 33-37. Key text, verse 37.

In this passage Jesus has in mind the third commandment, and is giving its deeper meaning or fulfilment. If we are habitually truthful, people will believe us without any oath. The commandment was sometimes interpreted to mean always keep your oath, but Jesus goes deeper and says, "Always be truthful, and you will not need oaths." Reverence forbids us take the name of God in vain, truthfulness makes it unnecessary. Say what you mean and mean what you say, and your words will have more force than any oaths can give. Be as scrupulous in your ordinary speech as you would be if you were on your oath. If two witnesses at a trial give conflicting evidence, so that one of them must be untruthful, the jury have to take account of their characters, and will believe the one who in ordinary speech is most truthful. The shepherd boy who frequently called

out, "The wolf! the wolf!" when there was no wolf, was not believed when the wolf really came. Those who tell lies will not be believed even when they speak the truth.

Swearing, even when God's name is not taken in vain, is a disgusting habit, and reveals lack of self-control and an impure mind. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

15*th February. Good for Evil.* Matthew v. 38-42. Key text, Romans xii. 21. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

We must always remember that with Jesus goodness is not a matter of obedience to rules of conduct, but the cultivation of a right disposition. In this passage he is not giving rules but examples. At first sight it would appear that here he is not so much fulfilling the law as corre ting it, but "an eye for an eye" was a check upon unbridled revenge, and further in actual practice this crude justice was modified and a fine or imprisonment inflicted instead of injury exactly alike in kind. The very spirit of Jesus is expressed in Proverbs xv. 1, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." What Jesus teaches is, never act on the principle of tit for tat, even though you may have to suffer pain and loss. Many a quarrel, which has ended in a broken friendship and perhaps blows, could have been avoided if there had been a little patience and kindliness. Tell the story of the bishop and the candlesticks from Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables." The bishop befriended an escaped convict and was repaid by the theft of the candlesticks which he treasured greatly. Yet when the convict was captured with the candlesticks on him, the bishop again befriended him, saying that he had given them to him. This returning of good for evil so impressed the convict that he changed his ways. England and France regarded each other as natural enemies for generations. When a common danger faced them, they determined to lay aside their enmity. There were many disputes unsettled, in Egypt, in Northern Africa, in Newfoundland, which disputes could not be settled as long as the two countries looked on each other as enemies. When they became friends, the disputes were very soon settled to their mutual satisfaction. Saul sought to kill David, but when David found him asleep and unprotected, and was urged by his followers to kill him, he spared Saul. This generous act made Saul ashamed, and won for David the respect and loyalty of the people. For our own sakes as well as for the sake of the evil-doer, we should avoid vindictiveness. Abraham Lincoln once said, "No man resolved to make the most of himself, can spare the time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper, and the loss of self-control."

22*nd February. Love your enemies.* Matthew v. 43-48. Key text, verse 44.

We cannot find the words "hate your enemies" in the law of Moses, but no doubt Jesus found that people thought it was quite the right thing to do, just as many people in our own day think so. He was justified in speaking against this spirit, even though the exact words were not found in the law. To-day's lesson is carrying last Sunday's lesson a step further. Jesus very much disliked the tit for tat temper. The word love has many meanings, here it means "show kindness to." It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to be fond of those who hate us, but we should try to be kindly towards them and seek to change their feeling towards us. We cannot change anybody's hate into love by hating them. If two people hate each other, the feeling between them will become more and more bitter; but if only one hates and the other is kindly and wants to be friends, there is some chance of the one who hates becoming ashamed of his hatred. In this passage Jesus says nothing of the effect of kindness on the one who hates, he simply points out that God is good

and just even to those who are ungrateful and disobedient. God does not allow offended dignity, or wounded pride, or enmity, to interfere with his justice and goodness. It is very hard to live up to such a high standard, and because it is hard, Jesus makes his appeal not to expediency but to the highest religious motive, "That ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven," To be sons is to have a like disposition. It is easy to be kind to those who are kind to us. There is honour among thieves. Those who make no attempt to follow the teachings of Jesus are kind to those who are kind to them. We should not be satisfied with that. To be perfect as God is perfect, means to be perfect in our kindness, not allowing personal resentment or a sense of injustice to check kindliness of thought, word or act.

29th February. True charity and true prayer. Matthew vi. 1-8. Key text, verse 1.

The law of revenge and the tit for tat spirit having been condemned, Jesus goes on to say what should be our motives for action. True charity and true prayer have their motive not in the desire to win the praises of men but to win the praise of God; or, in other words, not praise but praiseworthiness. If we really have kind hearts we should not like anybody to praise us for being kind any more than we should like to be praised for being honest. To praise anybody for not stealing is really an insult, for it is expressing surprise at his honesty. The kindly person does good because it is his nature to, and doesn't want to be patted on the back for it. If we think of men's praises we shall do things for the sake of being praised, and not because we really like doing them, we shall be acting a part, we shall be hypocrites. Note that Jesus, who was considerate and patient with those who often did wrong, spoke his strongest words against the hypocrites. He regarded them as worse than those whom we generally look upon as sinners. Do good and don't tell. Pray, but don't parade your piety. You can only do this if you really possess a kindly heart and a devout spirit. It doesn't matter whether other people know about it or not. Not the show of religion but the real thing is what Jesus always insists on.

In this and the other lessons for the month, the teacher is referred to Mr. Fox's "Practical Teaching of Jesus of Nazareth," for illustrations. Every teacher should carefully read the lessons in this book, as these notes are prepared on the understanding that this has been done. G. L. P.

YORK STREET ORDINATION.

The Ordination of Rev. F. Woolley took place on 22nd January, before a full congregation. The new start took place with an enthusiasm which augurs well for the future, and it was displayed when the Congregation flocked forward on being called upon to welcome their new minister immediately after he had been ordained.

It was good to see the church so full once more, and join in the hearty singing. It is common talk, too, that practically all the pews have been taken by the members of the new Congregation, and those who apply for sittings now have not much choice of seats.

Among those present were Rev. W. Maguire (Methodist), Rev. W. J. Calvin (Congregationalist), and Mr. H. C. Griffiths, Deputy Governor of H.M. Prisons.

Ordination is one of the most solemn rites of our Church; by it a man dedicates himself to the ministry of Christ; becomes an ambassador, who receives instructions and has a message to deliver, as Mr. Woolley put it. The Rev. G. V. Crooks, in his excellent exposition of Presbyterianism, described the Service as "a democratic marriage" between minister and people. Having put the usual questions to Mr. Woolley and the Congregation assembled, he solemnly declared the marriage completed, and Mr. Woolley knelt while the assembled fathers laid their hands on his head, and the Rev. A. O. Ashworth offered up the Ordina-

tion Prayer. The Service, which had been opened by appropriate Scripture reading and sermon by Rev. R. Philipson, closed with the charge to minister and Congregation delivered by Rev. G. L. Phelps, who also pronounced the Benediction.

The large gathering then made its way to the school-room below, where tea was served, to be followed by speeches in a lighter strain from several friends, and a programme, in which selections were given by the North Belfast Choir, prize-winner at the last Belfast Competitions, under the direction of Mr. W. R. Shanks, and richly deserved the applause which they received. Several solos and ecitations also contributed to make a thoroughly enjoyable programme. Rev. G L. Phelps presided.

And when the " grave and reverend seniors " had departed, then youth and beauty took possession of the ceremonies, and dancing became the order of the day—or night. This was kept up till——but why go into details ? For surely it is even truer to-day than it was at the time of Waterloo that there should be

" No sleep till morn when Youth and Pleasure meet.
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet."

MEMORIAL NOTICE.

MR. JOHN DRUMMOND, Larne.

Mr. John Drummond, than whom there was no more faithful and devout attender and worshipper in our Congregation, passed away with appalling suddenness on Monday, 29th December. He had attended public worship on the last Sunday of the year, and on the Monday had walked up hill twice to visit his farm in Ballycraigy, and spent the evening with his family in his usual cheerful manner, but met his end from heart failure on entering his room for the night. Quiet and unassuming, he did much for the good of the community on the different boards and other institutions for the general good. He loved the Old Meeting-house, and, like a namesake of Raloo, remembered us beneficially (as did Mr. Robert Hill Bailie) in his Will. He was from a good stock, including the late Dr. Drummond, of Dublin, originally a Larne man, and minister for some time of Second Belfast before removing to Dublin, a very learned theologian, poet, and patriot, widely known and much appreciated in his day and generation and after, as was another of the clan, who kept a public-house in Larne, and of whom the following true story was told to the writer fully 35 years ago by the late Mrs. Montgomery, the last of the Corran M'Neill's to cling to the old Congregation; and who knew the man: —" An Islandmagee man had sold his farm, but felt much perturbed as to the safe keeping of the price received in money, there being no banks then in Larne, and which now has three. A neighbour advised him to entrust it to auld Jack Drummond, who was 'ane o' thae new light folk who depended for salvation on their guid works." Our departed friend was loyal to the motto: " *noblesse oblige*," for he was a rigidly honest man. His remains (followed by a large concourse of people,) were borne to rest in the New Cemetery of his native parish, Kilwaughter, on New Year's Day, 1920. He leaves a widow, with one son and two daughters, to mourn their loss.

REPORTS.

Ballyclare.—Our Church lost a very staunch and faithful friend in the person of Miss Elizabeth Milliken, who died, after a short illness, on January 3rd. All who knew her felt very keenly the sad and sudden end ; and our deepest sympathies are tendered to her relatives. Her remains were removed from Belfast, at the home of her sister, Mrs. J. Alexander, to the family grave at Ballylinney, the services being conducted by the Rev. P. Godding.

* *

Belfast : First Church.—In order to help the cause of the starving children of Europe a Lantern Lecture was delivered by the minister, in the Central

Hall, on January 26th, the subject of which was "The Danube in Romance and Real Life," with limelight illustrations. There was a very crowded audience, which was too large for the capacity of the hall. Prior to the lecture some members had sent subscriptions, and these, together with the proceeds from the saleof tickets, a collection taken at the door after the lecture, and a small surplus forthcoming from the War Funds, made the total realised for the charity nearly £60. The latter is a very satisfactory sequel to the various war activities undertaken by the Congregation prior to November, 1918. These realised respectively:—St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors, £481 10s. 0d.; Limbless Soldiers, £643 12s. 11d.; Prisoners of War, £418 9s. 10d.; Comrades of the Great War, £108 13s. 3d.; Red Cross Society, £134; Fund to provide wool and other materials, £136 13s. 8d. Thus in all nearly £2,000 was raised by members of the Congregation and the many kind friends who supported their efforts. In addition to this monetary result, many thousands of knitted and other articles were made by members and despatched by the Ladies' Committee to the soldiers and sailors abroad or in the hospitals at home.

Comber.—On Wednesday, January 7th, a very successful Social Evening was held by the Young People's Society in connection with the above Church. The programme opened with a "Song-title Competition, which proved very interesting, the winners being Mrs. M'Kee, Comber, and Mr. Taylor Barnes, of Greyabbey. Violin selections were very effectively rendered by Miss Drew, Belfast. Songs were contributed by Miss Munn, Miss Todd, Miss M'Cormick, Mr. Taylor Barnes, Mr. M'Cabe, and a duet by Mrs. Hugh Ferguson and Rev. Glynne Davies. An enjoyable tea was provided by the young ladies of the Congregation. Games and dances were indulged in and thoroughly enjoyed by all present. Mrs. J. M. Andrews, Mrs. Munroe Ferguson, Mrs. Abernethy, and Mrs. Johnson very kindly acted as accompanists. The minister having proposed a hearty vote of thanks to all who had contributed to the programme, and to those who had provided the tea, the meeting was brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem.

Crumlin.—Friday afternoon, Dec. 19th, was the occasion of a Christmas Party given to the children of our Congregation. The school-room looked festive, a beautifully decorated Christmas tree, illuminated with all manner of coloured lights, and well laden with presents, proved a wonderful attraction. Games were played, in which all joined with mirth. After tea, presents were distributed. The children encircled the Christmas tree, and patiently the gifts were extricated from among the illuminations.

On Friday, December 26th, we sustained a heavy loss in the death of Mrs. Anna Neeson, widow of the late Dr. Neeson, of Aghalee, at the advanced age of 95. All her life she had been a very faithful and generous member of our Congregation—regular in attendance and punctual in the fulfilling of her obligations to the cause. She was one of those who possessed a good knowledge of the Unitarian teaching, and had imbibed deeply of the Unitarian faith. She was a person of wonderful vigour, and up to a few days previous to her death she had enjoyed wonderful good health. Last summer she went to live with her son, Mr. Horace Neeson, M.P.S., in London, and here her last days were spent.

Holywood.—A very successful meeting of the Total Abstinence Society was held on January 13th, Rev. G. L. Phelps presiding. The speaker for the evening was Rev. Henry M'Connell, the Methodist Minister at Holywood, and his interesting and vigorous address was very much appreciated. The songs by Miss Sparrow, Mr. Adams and Miss Allen were excellently rendered, and Mr. T. Shannon's recitations were up to his usual high standard. The attendance was good.

The Annual Sunday School Soiree was held on January 15th. About sixty children sat down to tea, and were joined by a large number of

friends afterwards. For about an hour various games were greatly enjoyed, then the seats were arranged and places taken and the Living Nigger Marionettes began their performance of songs and patter. Needless to say, this was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and we are greatly indebted to Mr. Harvey and his friends. Next came Father Christmas, who distributed the presents from the Christmas Tree. Mr. Willie Harvey impersonated Father Christmas in very fine style, and with the singing of the National Anthem, a most enjoyable evening came to a close.

Templepatrick.—On Saturday evening, the 24th January, Templepatrick Troop of Boy Scouts entertained their Scoutmaster, Mrs. John Campbell, and other friends, including the Girl Guides, with their Captain, Miss Getty, to tea at Castle Upton. In the course of the evening the patrol leaders and seconds presented Mrs. Campbell with a silver-mounted umbrella, and the Scouts gave her a handsome rose bowl, accompanied by addresses, in which regret was expressed that her departure from Castle Upton would sever her connection with the Troop. In returning thanks, Mrs. Campbell said it was with sorrow that she was compelled to terminate her association with the Boy Scouts of Templepatrick and cease to reside in the district. She commended the boys for their unfailing loyalty to their Scoutmaster and for their valuable help on many occasions, and she felt confident that in the days to come they would continue in the paths of truth and honour, from which she had never known them to deviate. On behalf of the Girl Guides and the ladies, Miss Getty expressed the regret they all felt at Mrs. Campbell's departure.

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